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TROPICAL BRITAIN.

It is a common remark, that a former dweller on the earth, were he permitted to revisit scenes once familiar, would find them in many instances changed out of all knowledge. We may with equal justness reverse the remark, and find it applicable to ourselves, were we taken back through the scenes of the historic past, and especially the long ages of the geological periods. Such glimpses of the past are not unattainable. All the principal geological and climatic changes which in succession have passed over the surface of the earth, have been self-registered. Successive landscapes have as it were photographed themselves upon the sensitive plate of the earth's successively renewed surface; their impressions lie buried beneath our feet everywhere, or traced on hill-slopes all around; and where uncovered or detected, though the lines are in many cases blurred and indistinct, to the trained eye of the student they unfold scenes which stand out before the mind with singular distinctness.

How fascinating the interest of endeavouring to recall the long past! Let us, therefore, imagine ourselves transported to the Britain of the Eocene period, and under the guidance of the most recent discoveries and conclusions of geologists and others, picture the scenes which would then meet our view. It is B.C.—we know not how many tens of thousands of years. One thing we are certain of—it is a long distance on this side of that chaotic period, millions of years ago, when, according to Mr G. H. Darwin and Professor Ball of Dublin, the earth, a huge molten mass, gave birth to the moon; and mother and daughter hung perilously near each other till the latter began that retreating movement which she still continues. The Primary and Secondary periods had already done their work in moulding our earth into habitable conditions for higher and higher forms of life. We are at the dawn (*Eocene*) of the Tertiary period, in whose later development man appears upon the scene.

But as we find our way to what is now British soil, and look around, how difficult to believe that we are in Britain's latitudes. For on every hand we see the rich and luxuriant life of the tropics; and the hot air smites us with faintness. From the teeming soil springs a bewildering variety of vegetation, and unfamiliar species appear everywhere. We recognise with astonishment forms of vegetable life which at present we naturally look for only in sunnier climes. When we examine closer, it seems, indeed, as if the plants and flowers of all regions of the earth are gathered around us. To see the nettle-trees, but especially the honeysuckle-trees (*Banksias*) and the leathery-leaved gum-trees (*Eucalypti*), we might fancy ourselves in Australia with its characteristic evergreen vegetation. The weird shapes of huge cacti, again, transport us to the regions of Central America, parched with frequent droughts, while the fig-tree at our side speaks of the shores of the Mediterranean; the palm yonder leads the thoughts to Africa; and that bread-fruit in the distance awakens visions of the beautiful scenery of the islands of the South Seas. Twining round the tree-stems, flinging their tendrils from branch to branch, creeping, twisting, interlacing everywhere, wreathing themselves in myriad graceful festoons, gorgeous with flowers of every hue, and making our forests as impassable as those of South America, are those wonderful climbing-plants, amid which veteran explorers might recognise their most inveterate foes.

And withal, the trees and plants of temperate climes abound also. And just as the British traveller of to-day in tropical latitudes welcomes the sight of them as old friends, linking him with the temperate regions which are his home, so in that far-back Eocene age, amid so much to make us doubt whether we are on British soil, we welcome the sight of the beech, the elm, the chestnut, and the oak. The air is alive with the hum of insect-life characteristic of the tropics. Glancing, flashing, gleaming in the sunlight, many of them rivalling in colour the flowers

over which they hover, these ephemeral creatures are fed by, and in their turn help to feed, the profusion of living forms which the prolific heat engenders.

And if the vegetation around is strange to us, stranger still are the animals and the birds we observe from time to time. Even while we stand entranced with delight at the rich and varied beauty of the forest scene, or the view by the sleeping waters of a lagoon, the ugly form of an alligator is seen floating like a log, with cruel watchfulness intent upon his prey. Yonder, again, a splash is heard, and there glides forth on land or water some fierce monster, of a shape which suggests that the goblins and dragons fabled by primitive races were not drawn wholly from imagination.

Lingering still in the Britain of the past, we must beware of bathing in this noble stream, whose waters, bending round in graceful curve, have here left a clear stretch of sand and gravel, and yonder are swept by the overhanging luxuriance of the forest. Safe, tempting as it looks, the crocodile and its cousin the gavial, with long, flat, ugly muzzle, are not far off. Peeping through the forest branches, rustling the leaves as they steal down to drink, we catch glimpses of bright graceful creatures not unlike the deer and the antelope, and probably the progenitors of these. Curious it seems to catch sight of one of the oldest and least changed of still living species, an opossum peering down upon us from the branches overhead; while we discover with surprise that animals like the kangaroo are native to these shores. We seem to be in half-a-dozen different regions of the earth at once. Places as distant as the Malay Peninsula and the forest recesses of South America, are brought to our door, when we see in these latitudes the tapir, for example, with his long flexible snout and thick hide, feeding greedily on the tender tree-shoots. High overhead, in the serene air, floats the vulture, looking for the dead. Down stream, kingfishers flash to and fro with gleaming plumage; and herons stand watching for their finny prey. Birds shaped like geese, but with what resemble teeth upon their beak, flounder in the water; while in the open glades feed others, huge and wingless, like a now extinct species in New Zealand.

And when, emerging from the forests, we stand on the shores of the shallow Eocene Sea on the south-east, we find it also teeming with the life of tropical as well as temperate climes. Flights of gulls crest its waves, or hover over it, dashing down from time to time to seize an unlucky fish. 'Gigantic sharks, rays, sword-fishes and sturgeons' tumble about in its waters, and find abundant prey; while among them is a peculiar armour-clad fish. Gliding in graceful undulations are sea-snakes twelve feet long; while the number of turtles is countless. The nautilus frequents the seas; the cowny, minute and burdensome coin of India, abounds upon the sand beneath our feet; and other tropical shells, as the cone, volute, olive, and large spindle shells, seem to be indigenous to the shores.

Nor are these the only features of the scene fitted to fill us with surprise. There are many other characteristics of British scenery and geography in that Eocene period which startle us

by their contrast with the present. What a rude shock, for example, to our insular exclusiveness and sense of insular security, to discover that Eocene Britain is not an island! Not only do Ireland and all the islands to the west and north form an integral portion of it, but it is joined on the south-west to Bretagne. From the east of Scotland to Norway extends a great valley covered with forests, and watered by a noble river receiving its tributaries from the ravines of what are now Norwegian fjords and the firths of Moray and Forth. And stranger still, there is a land-connection, broadening as we follow it northward, extending from the north-west of Scotland by way of the Farøe Isles and Iceland, to Greenland and the northern portion of North America.

And while our land forms a portion of two continents, the coast-line of Britain is at the same time far more extensive in these Eocene times than now. The sea tossed and moaned far distant from these cliffs and bays of to-day. Many miles out beneath the Atlantic are the old shores of England and Ireland. Land's End is thus not the land's end, but a lofty inland plateau breaking away probably in terrific precipices on the south and west; and stretching away from the base of these is an undulating plain covered with dense forests, its bounds washed by the remote Atlantic. Northward, where we expect to see the gleaming waters of the Bristol Channel, we behold a wide valley, along which the waters of the Severn flow, till at a point farther west than the now westmost part of Ireland, they join the ocean. Eddystone Rock needs no lighthouse. It is probably a lofty mountain peak. Torquay is far inland. All the delightful bays and pleasant health-resorts of the south-west of our England are many miles from any sea.

We look with deep interest and curiosity to see how much of the present well-known scenery of mountain, plain, and valley can be identified; and under the guidance of Professor Dawkins and others, discover that the general outlines of English, Scotch, and Irish landscapes are much more striking, bolder, more abrupt than now; not having been yet smoothed by the action of the ice of later periods. We gaze with wonder not unmingled with awe on the wild grandeur of the mountain scenery of Wales, Cumberland, and Western Scotland, in the dawn of this period. Many of the mountains of the Hebrides are active volcanoes. Volcanic agency has built them up. Hence we see them as groups of cone and dome like shapes, like those of Auvergne of to-day, 'rising above the forest which spread from these rugged Alpine heights, far away in one mass of green, broken only by the rivers, to Ireland and the remote coast-line of the Western Sea.' But their height fills us with astonishment. See that volcano of Mull, of which but a fragment now remains, grand doubtless, in its way, but insignificant when compared with the ancient magnificence of the mountain. It has been calculated—by Professor Judd—as from ten to fourteen thousand feet high, inclusive of the cone rising above the trees in the distance yonder. These Welsh, Cumbrian, and Scotch mountains are more than twice as high as in degenerate nineteenth-century

times. Such at least are they, according to one geological authority; in the period immediately succeeding the Eocene—namely, the Miocene. Low as even these heights are in comparison with the giants of the Himalaya and the Andes, we cannot, gazing on the Highland hills of to-day, think without wonder and awe of an ancient grandeur which made them worthy rivals of even the Cottian, Pennine, and Bernese Alps, with their historic summits—Monte Viso, Mont Blanc, and the Jungfrau. On those awful heights, the snow never melted. Clouds floated around their dazzling ice-clad summits, and hid from time to time their white, sky-piercing peaks. Dizzy precipices, abyssal ravines, cleft and scarred their sides. Go where one would, the solemn grandeur of these towering mountain masses must ever have dominated the view; while more awe-inspiring still the spectacle when from time to time one or other of them burst forth in volcanic fury, vomiting ashes and fire, and spreading far and near, over the luxuriant vegetation beneath, death and desolation.

Curious in its way it is to think how different would have been every feature of our life of to-day, had those Eocene conditions lasted till now. So completely are those physical circumstances distinct from those of the present, that to all but such as have made a special study of them, they must at first appear unnatural and incredible. Yet the fossil remains of plants, animals, birds, fishes, found in these islands, tell their own tale; and speak of tropical conditions of temperature, and distributions of land and sea very different from those of to-day.

Wonderful as it is to think of that teeming life multiplying itself in myriad forms, and spreading its beauty and its fitness forth beneath the Creator's eye; more wonderful still, and instructive too, it is to think of it all as a vast and steady progress and preparation which is to culminate in the appearance of Man, the 'minister and interpreter of nature,' to whose gradually strengthening gaze these long ages of the past now unfold themselves; and who, from their petrified remains, pictures many a life that had begun, culminated, and perished, ages before his epoch.

VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

CHAPTER XLIV.—'AY!' CRIED GARLING IN A QUAVING VOICE, 'YOU HAVE PUNISHED ME ENOUGH, AMONGST YOU.'

HAVING once decided in her travelled mind that foreign cities were not only unlike London, but exceedingly unlike each other, Mary was steeled against the surprises of costume, architecture, and physiognomy. But that she shared the common frailty, and was not steeled against the amazement of meeting what used to be common in the midst of so much uncommonness, was fairly proved by the fact that suddenly encountering Hiram Search in a shady street in Cadiz, she sat upon a convenient doorstep and fainted. Hiram himself, though much amazed by the encounter, was less affected, and seizing a passing water-carrier, borrowed his little tin vessel, and knelt above his sweetheart and laved her temples

and her lips until she recovered. He had pictured to himself another meeting, and had all ready for delivery an impressive discourse calculated for her moral benefit; but now, when she came round, he was nursing her head upon his breast and murmuring, 'My poor darlin', my poor darlin', and taking not the slightest notice of half-a-dozen ugly but picturesque old women, and one picturesque and astonishingly pretty young one, who suddenly found this little drama acting beneath their noses, and stood attentively to watch it through. Mary was much more sensitive to public observation than her lover. The first thing she did was to arrange her bonnet and lower her veil, the next to resume her seat upon the convenient doorstep and cry comfortably. Hiram addressed the assembled ladies in their own language, and begged them to disperse; but being unable to prevail upon them, he lifted Mary to her feet, tucked her arm under his, and marched off with her.

'Mrs Strange is in Cadiz, I suppose?' asked Hiram.

'Yes,' answered Mary; 'and Mr Strange. They are going home to their house at Brierham.'

Hiram's reception of this simple piece of news astonished Mary; but it meant so much to him that she could not understand. He resolved at once to keep a hawk's eye on his master.

'You have been very angry with me, Hiram,' said Mary, attacking the subject next her heart; 'but you will forgive me, won't you?'

Somehow, Hiram's sternness had dissolved, and he forgave her, without the lecture he had intended to deliver; and she began to bubble over with innocent happiness and gaiety, and to talk of her curiosities of modern travel, all grown remarkable again, now that Hiram was here to listen whilst she spoke of them. He allowed her to run on, and threw in here and there a question to direct her talk, so that, without alarming her by any inkling of his own fears, he drew from her a contradiction of them. Gerard had touched neither at Naples nor Marseilles, and could, therefore, not be here of malice aforethought, since he had no knowledge of his enemy's journey. And just as this dread was finally lifted from Hiram's mind, Mary stopped, and clasping his arm with both hands, made as if to hide herself behind him, whilst with frightened eyes she stared across the street. Following the direction of her glance, he was aware of his master, standing stock-still with folded arms, unconscious of their presence, but tracking with eyes that burned like fire another figure in their rear, which, as they halted, approached them, leaning heavily on a walking-stick, and moving with a dejected head and downward glance. The face of this bent and ancient-looking figure was hidden from Hiram, though visible to Gerard. The latter crossing the sunny pavement, stepped into shadow within two yards of Hiram, so absorbed in his contemplation of the bent figure that he had no eyes for his servant. When the man tottered and quavered quite close, Gerard gripped him by the shoulder, and the pinched old face whose hollow careworn eyes looked up at him was the face of Garling. Hiram fell back a step with an exclamation which drew his master's regard upon him. Garling's glance travelled from one

to another, with an uneasy half-apprehension of their presence. His own daughter; the man who had ruined his plans; and the son of the man he had plotted to ruin. He murmured that they had not often looked so real, and made as if to pass on; but Gerard's grasp detained him.

'So you are here, Mr Garling, are you?' asked Gerard, swaying the quivering old figure gently to and fro in his strong hand. 'Your villainy hasn't led to happiness, either?' That truth was written in his face.

'That's new,' said Garling, turning his head aside, as if to listen. 'They say the same things over and over again. A trick—a mere trick, to trap me into weakness and confession.'

'Mister,' said Hiram, 'he's as mad as a March hare!'

The old man's eyes shifted to the last speaker, with a new look in them, half dreadful, half inquiring. Then they wandered to his daughter's face. 'Why don't you speak?' he asked.

She shrank away from him. 'Hiram,' she said falteringly, 'he frightens me. Take me away.'

'You can't hold malice against a thing like this?' said Hiram, addressing his master.

'Malice?' replied Gerard, dropping the hand that had held Garling. 'No.'

'Ay!' cried Garling in a quavering voice, 'you have punished me enough, amongst you! But you were gentle when the rest were hard. Perhaps you guessed I meant to use you kindly after all.' This was to Mary, who shrank back from him appalled. 'Ay, you're afraid of me; but I meant well by you. And I mean well by you still. It isn't much, compared with what it might have been, but it is all honestly come by, and that's a great matter—a great matter. Make a good use of it.'

The three who heard him looked from one to the other, and little Mary, whose nerves had already been greatly shaken, began to cry again.

'Why, now you weep,' he said, 'and I perceive you feel some touch of pity. Ah, that's Shakspeare! I was a great student of Shakspeare when I was a lad. A man of lofty imagination, and versed in all the mysteries of human nature. Cæsar haunted Brutus. But no man was ever so crowded round with ghosts as I have been.'

It was evident alike to Gerard and to Hiram that he was not sure of their corporeal unreality, but they could each trace the meaning beneath these scattered words of his.

'You don't take me for a ghost, do you, mister?' said Hiram.

Garling looked startled and perplexed, and made as if to go on again, but turning, caught sight of Mary, and laid his hand on her gently. 'Don't go,' he whispered; 'don't leave me. I shall make it worth your while.'

'Heaven's my witness, mister,' said Hiram earnestly to Gerard, 'that I don't want my little gell to finger a penny of his money, if he's got any; but it ain't the thing to leave him in this condition in a foreign city. He's been a rare bad old lot, and that's a fact; but he ought to be looked after.'

Gerard returning no answer, Hiram laid his hand on Garling's shoulder and addressed him in Spanish. 'Do you speak the language, old man? Can you get on by yourself?'

'Yes, yes,' returned Garling, putting him fretfully aside, and striving once more to get past Hiram to his daughter, who, with terror in every gesture and feature, avoided him.

'Take her away,' said Gerard. 'I will see that he does not follow you. I can get somebody to take charge of him, I daresay.—You needn't be afraid of me, Search,' he said, somewhat bitterly. 'Heaven has taken vengeance here.'

'That's like yourself,' returned Hiram. 'That's the first thing like you sence we sailed out of Thames river!'

'Take her away,' said Gerard again, speaking sternly this time. Hiram obeyed.

The old man struggled to pursue the retreating pair; but Gerard, passing an arm through Garling's, turned round, and led him in the way he had been originally going. He resented this for a moment only, and then, with drooping eyes, submitted.

'Where do you live?' asked Gerard.

Garling raised his stick a little from the ground and pointed forward. He went on slowly but without hesitation; and before they had gone far, he paused, and drawing a key from his pocket, entered at an open doorway, mounted a set of white stone steps, and admitted himself to a large chamber, furnished in the fashion of the country, which always looks sparse to an English eye, but with no sign of poverty or neglect in its appearance.

'Is this your home?' Gerard demanded softly.

Garling laid down his hat and stick and passed a hand across his forehead before answering. When he responded, it was with a tone and manner so different from those he had hitherto employed, that the questioner was startled. 'This is my home, Mr Lumby, and will be for the remainder of my time.' He motioned his visitor to a seat, and himself sank down wearily. 'I cannot resent your intrusion,' he said feebly; 'and since you have found me here, you may tell my late employers that I am a good deal worn, and that I shall not last much longer. I have had many troubles lately, Mr Gerard, and my mind is affected; I feel it unhinged at times. I was proud of my intellect many years ago, and I misused it. I am broken down, as you may know by these confessions; shattered, quite shattered, and an old man.' The light alternately flickered and faded on his face, and his voice seemed to fall and rise with the brightening and the dying of an inward gleam. At one second his face and voice looked and sounded altogether sane, and in the next both had grown senile. The words 'I am broken down' were maundering: 'as you may know by these confessions' followed swiftly, with a re-assertion of his ancient self: 'shattered, quite shattered; an old man,' might have been spoken by one hopelessly gone in melancholia.

'The evil you attempted to do us, failed, or partly failed,' said Gerard. He might have gone on to say more; but Garling broke in with a murmur: 'Failed? Yes, yes. It failed.' Then they both sat silent for a time, until Garling looked up with a bewildered air. 'Help me, he said; 'I want to think of something. Whom did I meet? Have I met anybody to-day?'

'Your daughter?' asked Gerard.

'Yes,' he said, brightening instantly, but sinking

back again. By-and-by he said, in the old dry reticent way which the listener could remember from his boyhood:—'It is a curious thing for me to ask a favour of any man belonging to your house. Will you do me one?'

'If I can,' said Gerard. 'Yes.'

'There is some remnant of my own money left me, and I wish my daughter to inherit it. I have not command of myself at all times, and my mind is shattered. It is going. What did I want to say?'

'Listen to me,' said Gerard, as he drooped again. 'You wish to make a will in your daughter's favour?'

'Yes, yes.'

'Entirely and without reserve?'—He nodded. 'Yes' again, with brightening eyes.—'And you wish me to have it prepared and bring it to you to sign?'

'Yes,' he said, once more collected; 'and to make immediate provision for the transfer of my last penny to an English bank.' He arose and produced papers, and gave instructions drily and clearly, without even a verbal stumble. 'If you bring a lawyer with you,' he said then, 'see me before you bring him, and let him meet me at my best.'

Gerard promised this also; and Garling again began to maunder in his speech; and after a time the young fellow left him, bound by his undertaking, but not sure that the broken swindler would ever again be in a mental condition to make any business transaction valid. He did perhaps the wisest thing he could do, and consulted the British consul, to whom he told the whole story. The consul himself drafted Garling's last testament, and he and Gerard witnessed the document when it was signed. When called upon for his signature, Garling was in the full possession of his powers. The man's tremendous will was equal to the strain he made upon it; but it never answered to another call; and in a week his stubborn wasted heart beat its last, and the ghosts his wicked life had gathered round him haunted him no more.

CURIOUS CASES OF GUNSHOT WOUNDS.

BY A RETIRED ARMY SURGEON.

HAVING read the article on 'Curious Facts relating to Gunshot Wounds,' in No. 931 of your *Journal*, I send you a few facts relating to wounds of the above nature, which came under my own observation while I was surgeon of a regiment.

At the relief of the Residency of Lucknow, during the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the following cases were brought to me. A private of my own regiment who had remarkably prominent eyes and a very flat nose, had both eyes cut open by a bullet which passed across them without injuring the nose. Another private was struck by a bullet on the outer edge of the right orbit. It broke the bone, and grooved the temple deeply. I dressed the wound, and applied a bandage to keep the dressing in its place, and desired the man to sit down while I attended to other cases. There is an old saying which was in use amongst sailors, namely, 'If you wish

to be safe, put your head into a hole that has been made by a cannon-ball, as the chances are that a second shot will not strike the same spot.' The case of this man, however, was a curious contradiction to this saying. About an hour after I had dressed his wound, I missed him; and as I was making inquiries about him, he presented himself, wounded a second time, and strange to say, in the very same spot, the bullet having ripped up the bandage and the dressing, and considerably enlarged the first wound. It appeared that after the first wound had been dressed, feeling that he had the use of his arms and legs, he slipped quietly away while my back was turned, rejoined his company in the fight, and was wounded almost immediately in the very same spot.

A third private was struck by a bullet on the outer edge of the left orbit. The bone was broken, and there was only a small wound, about a quarter of an inch long, on the skin, extending downwards—so small, that I did not think it possible that a bullet could have entered it. The wound healed; and for eight years afterwards the man did his duty. About the end of the eighth year, however, an abscess formed at the spot where he had been wounded; and on opening it, I observed a small dark body appearing just above the edge of the orbit. At first I thought it was a piece of dead bone; but on removing it, found it to be the half of a bullet. It had been lying within the orbital space under the eyeball for eight years. When he was wounded, the bullet must have been split on the edge of the bone, one half flying off, and the other half lodging within the orbit. He lost the sight of the eye from the moment that he was wounded, though there was no apparent injury to the organ; but strange to say, the half-bullet lying under the eyeball never gave him the least inconvenience; and he was as much astonished as I was when I removed and handed it to him.

A fourth private, a huge man, standing six feet four inches, and with an immense chest and frame, was struck by a bullet on the breast-plate, and knocked down, but without being injured, except that 'the wind was knocked out of him,' as he said himself. How such a huge body could have been knocked down by a musket-bullet, was astonishing.

A fifth private was struck on the rim of his feather bonnet. This broke the force of the bullet; but it passed through the frontal bone and lodged in his brain. He was quite sensible, had no pain, and only complained of giddiness. He was sent home as an invalid; and two years afterwards I heard that he was still alive.

Another private advancing at a run, had his mouth open; a bullet entered his mouth, passed between the skin and the muscle which is attached to the angle of the jawbone, and was removed from beneath the skin at the back of the neck. At first, he was not aware of having been

wounded, and was astonished to find himself spitting blood and his jaw gradually becoming stiff.

Another private was slightly wounded three days in succession, and began to think that he had had his full share, and would escape for the future. One day, however, as he was sitting in his tent in camp, into which the enemy occasionally sent shot and shell, a six-pounder round-shot came ricochetting along the ground, burst into the tent where the man was sitting, and struck him on the back, rolling him heels-over-head. He lay gasping for a minute or two, thinking he was done for; but he gradually recovered his breath, found that he could move his legs, then his arms, then that he could sit up; and at last he stood up, and with the assistance of a comrade on each side, walked to the hospital, which was close by, sheltered behind some ruins. He was black and blue for some time, and that was all. He was never wounded again.

An officer of my acquaintance is now living—I saw him only a few months ago, looking remarkably well—who has a bullet lodged in the base of his right lung, and it has been there since 1857, as he was wounded during the Mutiny. He suffers very little inconvenience, except that occasionally he has a fit of coughing, followed by expectoration of blood.

On the field of Inkermann, sixteen months after the battle, I picked up the mummified head of a Russian. The eyelids, nose, lips, and skin of the cheeks, were still discernible, and the skull was covered by the scalp, to which some light yellow hair adhered. There was a hole right through the skull; and I found half a bullet lying between the scalp and the bone, on the top of the head. The bullet must have struck the bone, and been split, one half passing right through the head, and the other lodging under the scalp. I brought the skull home, and gave it to a brother medical officer, who promised to send it to the Museum of the College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

A native servant of a brother-officer was struck by a bullet on the forehead just above the left frontal sinus. The bullet was wedged into the bone; the skin healed over it, and the man resumed his duty, and lived, feeling no inconvenience, for nearly a year. Suddenly one day he fell down, and after being convulsed for a couple of minutes, died. I had never heard of this case until after the man's death; but the moment it was reported to me, I went to see and examine the wound. I found a round bullet wedged tightly into the bone, two-thirds of it extending beyond the inner plate of the skull, and pressing on the brain, which immediately round the spot of pressure was softened.

On first entering the army—upwards of thirty-seven years ago—I was ordered to join a regiment at the Cape of Good Hope; and within eighteen months after my arrival, a Kafir war broke out, and was protracted during two years—the war of 1846-7. During the second year of the war, I was with a detachment of my regiment, which was encamped on the north bank of the Great Fish River, close to the sea, for the purpose of protecting government stores which were landed there, that being the nearest point to the scene of hostilities. Upon a certain day, a sergeant

and one of the privates left the camp without leave, taking a horse with them to bring home some green forage. They went without fire-arms or any other kind of weapon, which was simply folly; but they had been so often on similar expeditions before and seen no enemy, that they concluded there were none in the neighbourhood. On arrival at some oat-fields, they tied the horse to a stump of a tree, cut a supply of forage, and were in the act of making it up into two bundles, to sling over the horse, when three Kaffirs, one armed with a gun, and the others with assegais, who had been lying concealed in the tall oats, sprung upon them. The one with the gun was facing the sergeant, who thought that his only chance was to close at once with his enemy, and accordingly he rushed forward with that object; but just as he was about to grasp the barrel of the gun, the Kafir fired, the muzzle of the weapon almost touching the sergeant's stomach as he did so. Though he felt that he was wounded, the sergeant grappled with the Kafir, and after a struggle, wrenched the gun out of his hands, and clubbing it, struck him a blow on the head which killed him. The private in the meantime had fallen pierced by assegais. While the sergeant and the Kafir were struggling, one of the other two Kaffirs ran to where the horse was tied up, and cut the halter through with his assegai. But the horse thus freed escaped from the Kafir, and fortunately approached his master, who got upon his back and galloped off towards the camp.

I was standing at the door of my hut, and saw the sergeant gallop in and dismount; and to my surprise, he walked quietly up to me, saluted, and said: 'I am wounded, sir;' and then he turned and walked with me to the hospital, and on entering the hut, fainted. We laid him on a cot and removed his clothes, when I found that he was shot right through the abdomen. The bullet had entered a little to the left of the umbilicus, passed straight through, and made its exit just below the rim of the ala—or large curved bone—of the pelvis, making a clean round hole. The skin round the wound in front was much scorched, showing that the muzzle of the gun must have been very close to the part when fired.

He rallied slowly from his faint; but of course I thought the wound was a mortal one, and that my patient had not many hours to live, so sat beside him during the afternoon and all that night, and attended to him next day, giving him a little nourishment frequently. To my astonishment, he relished his nourishment and fell asleep, and woke up and took more soup and fell asleep again. Meanwhile, no bad symptoms appeared, and as there was no interruption of the visceral functions, I began to be hopeful.

Matters went on in this way for several days, during which the only discomfort—I could not call it suffering—that he felt was that the scorched dead flesh around the wound in front began to separate; and when this came away, there was exposed a large opening nearly two inches square, through which I saw plainly then, and for days thereafter, the bowels lying in their natural position, and apparently uninjured; and yet I could hardly believe this possible. However, the case went on favourably; the large hole

gradually contracted and healed up, and so did the wound behind; and within two months from the day that he was wounded, he was able to move about, and within another month, to make his appearance on parade again.

It was an extraordinary case. The bullet must have passed straight through; for there was nothing to deflect it, and the two wounds were exactly opposite each other. How the bowels escaped injury, was truly wonderful; and I can only explain it by supposing that the bullet—a small round smooth one—passed immediately under the large, and above the small intestine, in fact between the two, and as close as possible to each, almost touching both. This happened thirty-six years ago; and within the last seven years, I heard from an old brother-officer that the man was alive and healthy, though well stricken in years. Wounds in the abdomen are almost always fatal, and this is the only case of recovery within my experience.

One or two cases of very narrow escapes from death by a bullet occur to me. During the Kaffir war which I have already alluded to, I several times accompanied large parties of troops sent out to intercept or pursue bodies of the enemy; or to destroy kraals or capture cattle. We never succeeded in intercepting or overtaking Kaffirs unless they were in strong parties and desired to fight; and as we marched along by day, the Kaffirs, in loose order and in parties of two or three, would hang upon our flanks and rear, showing themselves upon the high ground, but keeping out of range of our muskets.

One night, four of us were sitting cross-legged round a little fire on which we had put our coffee-kettle to boil; and as we thus sat, a report, followed by the ping of a bullet close over our heads, warned us that Kaffirs were prowling about. This was followed by several other shots, which struck the ground quite close to us; but we were tired and cold and hungry, having had no food all day, and we were unwilling to lie down to sleep on the bare ground with empty stomachs. We therefore determined, in spite of danger, to keep the fire burning until the coffee was ready; and to hurry this, one of us stooped down to blow the fire with his mouth, when another shot settled the matter, for a bullet passing between two of us, smashed the kettle, and scattered the embers about the head of the one who was blowing the fire. How close the bullet passed to his head may be imagined, for it touched his hair. There was nothing to be done but to stamp all the embers out, roll ourselves in our cloaks, and light our pipes to keep down the cravings of hunger.

At the relief of the Residency of Lucknow, the colonel of my regiment had two very narrow escapes. As he was cantering from one position to another, the motion of the horse raised him a little out of the saddle every now and then, and just at the moment when he was raised out of the saddle, a bullet passed below him, tearing the leather open along the whole seat of the saddle. Had he been sitting still in the saddle, he would have been horribly wounded. Shortly after, another bullet struck the handle of his revolver, which was in a pouch attached to his sword-belt, and but for the revolver, he would have received a mortal wound.

At the battle of Cawnpore, on the 6th December 1857, one of the men of my regiment had his arm at the elbow shattered by a round-shot, and I determined to perform amputation above the elbow, on the field, so got the man well under a bank, and out of danger as I thought. Unfortunately, the camels with ammunition crowded round us; and just as I was about to commence the operation, a shell from one of the enemy's guns came amongst us, and striking one of the ammunition boxes on the nearest camel, not three yards from us, exploded and blew up the ammunition also. Bullets flew in every direction; but though several assistants and myself were there, not one of us was touched, even the camel escaping uninjured.

On the same day as the regiment to which I belonged was advancing in line, a shrapnel shell burst right over us and wounded a few of the men. One of the bullets struck an officer in high command (since dead), who with his staff was riding close behind the line. I saw that the bullet had torn his coat open from the shoulder half way down his back, and ran up to his assistance. I got him to dismount, and took him into a dry ditch, and as he was in the act of sitting down, a round-shot struck the top of the bank. Had he been standing erect, the shot would have carried off his head.

On the same day, the brother of this officer, to whose staff he was attached, received a very singular wound. A grape-shot struck the scabbard of his sword, touched his stirrup, and entered the outside of the left foot below a prominent bone (the cuboid), passed under the sole, and lodged on the inner side or arch of the foot, from which position I removed it. This was a very remarkable wound, in that no bone was broken or injured. This officer is alive at the present time, and has the use of his foot, though I have heard that he walks a little lame. I have not seen him since the day on which he was wounded.

At the siege of Lucknow, the chaplain attached to a Highland regiment was in his tent, and while in the act of opening a box, a round-shot fired at a high elevation came straight down through the tent, passed close to his head, struck the box he was in the act of opening, and rebounded, again almost striking his head in its rebound. This gentleman is at the present time minister of a Scotch parish, and may possibly read this, and remember the start he got, and how we laughed over it.

It is sometimes quite possible to see a cannon-ball in its flight, and easy to follow its course after it has once touched the ground; and I have more than once seen the ranks open, when the regiment was in line, to let a ball pass.

In the midst of danger, soldiers are sometimes prone to jest and laugh, and even play practical jokes on each other, as the following anecdotes will show. During the trench-work before Sebastopol, there was a certain man in the regiment who disliked being on duty in the trenches, and who always got into what he considered the safest corner of the trench, and remained there as long as he could. The bugler of his company, a malicious urchin, soon found this out, and was constantly in the habit of playing tricks to frighten his cautious comrade.

He would peep over the parapet and call out 'A shot!' and then turn round to see his friend roll himself together like a ball. At other times he would call out 'A shell!' of which he knew the man had a mortal dread; and when he saw him throw himself flat on the ground, he would take a piece of earth or a stone and throw it close to his recumbent friend's head, and then run up and comfort him by showing him a bit of an old shell which he had picked up for the purpose, remarking at the same time: 'That was a near thing, man.' All the men knew and enjoyed the joke, and sometimes roared with laughter; but it was well for the urchin that his friend never found him out.

This same man was really wounded afterwards, and while I was removing the bullet from beneath the skin of his back, the same 'urchin' was standing by, and the moment I had extracted the bullet—a small spherical one—the boy held out to his friend a six-pound cannon-ball, saying: 'See what the doctor has cut out o' ye!' This occurred while my back was turned; but on hearing the remark, I looked round, and saw the boy holding out the shot, and the bystanders convulsed with laughter, and quite regardless of the heavy fire going on around us.

THE ENFIELD COURT ROBBERY.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

UPON further investigation, it was found that while the robbery at Enfield Court had been most carefully planned and premeditated, the fire had evidently been an accidental part of the thieves' programme, as a hastily done-up bundle, containing some valuable articles, was discovered just outside the supper-room window, as if dropped in a hasty exit. Happily, the fire had been subdued in time to save the greater portion of the house; but the damage done, to say nothing of the immense loss caused by the robbery, was very considerable.

In due time, two detectives came down from London, and the excitement continued unabated in the neighbourhood whilst they remained; but nothing transpired. They maintained an amount of stolid reticence which to the curious was most provoking; and finally they departed without having apparently done anything towards solving the mystery, far less securing the thieves.

Gradually things seemed to settle down, and the robbery at Enfield was replaced in my mind by my entire absorption in Amy's engagement, to which I had given a qualified consent, on the condition that Mr Mauleverer's family were satisfied with the connection, and that pecuniary matters were properly adjusted. Now that he had actually declared himself, I felt emboldened to ask questions and ascertain everything I possibly could as to the antecedents of the man who was to be my darling's husband.

He was well connected. His mother was dead; but his father was alive, and lived in great seclusion at his own property, which was situated in Yorkshire. He was reputed to be rich; but on this point I could gain no definite information. Still, remembering Lady Dasent's 'very well off,'

I was not much troubled on the score of money matters. I had felt it incumbent upon me to invite him to spend a few days with us before he left for Yorkshire, and it seemed natural that he should come to us. I told him frankly that Amy had very little money of her own—something less than two thousand pounds; but at my death, I intended to leave her everything, which I felt sure he would approve of being tied up and strictly settled upon herself.

I thought his expression changed a little when I mentioned this, and still more so when I casually asked him in a friendly way if he always meant to be an idle man; for he had left the army, it appeared; and I was anxious, for Amy's sake, to see some symptom of his wishing to get an appointment or occupation of some kind.

Meanwhile, Amy seemed satisfied; but my doubts—born of my extreme affection for her—began to arise, and refused to be silenced.

Mr Mauleverer had written to his father announcing his engagement; but as yet neither line nor message from the old gentleman had reached us. It was not treating Amy properly; and though Amy's entreaties to me to be patient, and oft-repeated assurances that Alfred said everything would be all right, silenced me for a time, I was fully resolved to see matters either ended or placed on a satisfactory footing before much longer time elapsed.

In the meantime, Mr Mauleverer received one morning a telegram, which he informed us contained the news of the illness of an old friend of his in London. He must start immediately, if he wished to see him alive. If I did not mind, he would leave his heavy luggage behind him, and only take a small portmanteau. Unless something very special happened to detain him, he would be with us again in a couple of days. His adieux were hurried, but impressive. He seemed really sorry to leave Amy, who was, however, enabled to bid him a cheerful good-bye on the strength of his speedy return.

On the morning of the second day after he had taken his departure, Amy was evidently expecting a letter from him—not unreasonably, I thought, as it was natural she should wish to hear that he had reached his destination safely. She was rather restless and fidgety. Perhaps that was the cause of my own almost nervous feelings as post-time approached. I could settle down to nothing.

'Amy, darling,' I said presently, 'suppose you take the garden scissors and snip these geraniums for me; they want it badly.'

So Amy stepped out on to the little lawn with its still brightly filled parterres; and I watched her from the drawing-room window with feelings of mingled love, anxiety, and apprehension, for do what I might, I could not get over the sense of some impending calamity—something sorrowful for her. Soon afterwards, she joined me, radiant with her letter, the first she had ever received from him; a very ardent, gentlemanly epistle, I was obliged to own; satisfactory too, as it contained the information that he had heard from his father, who, on certain conditions, which he saw his way to comply with, had promised to consent to the marriage. A letter for me from old Mr Mauleverer had been inclosed in his letter to his son; but the latter preferred delivering it

to me personally; consequently, I would not receive it until his return to us.

Amy had an engagement that afternoon to visit the Dasents, who were now installed in a small house they had at some distance from the Court, whilst the latter was being repaired. She was to drive over, taking our small groom with her; and I was not to expect her back until after nine o'clock at the earliest; so I was to spend a solitary evening. After she left me, I wrote a few letters; then I tried to read; but my attention wandered. A slight drowsiness came over me, and I suppose I fell asleep. All at once I woke up with a consciousness of some one standing just outside the closed window, gazing into the room, and I discerned distinctly the features of a man's face pressed closely against the window-pane. I was not generally nervous, but I confess a thrill of fear shot through me then, and for a moment I was almost too terrified to stir. The next instant I got up, and simultaneously with my doing so, the face vanished. But the eyes I had so clearly seen might be watching me still. I controlled all outward symptoms of alarm or consciousness of what I had seen; and after a few minutes—to me each seemed an hour—I moved towards the door, and summoned one of my servants. I mentioned the circumstance to her, and enjoined extra care that night as to our bolts and bars. Though we had neither gold plate nor diamonds to attract thieves, still there was enough silver to satisfy moderate cupidity, and it was wonderful how such facts got abroad. After the Enfield Court robbery, one could not be too careful.

Very soon Margaret my servant had secured all the shutters, drawn the curtains, and I sat down to my solitary tea, wishing most fervently that Amy were safely within doors again.

A sudden storm had come on; the wind had risen to a hurricane, and bade fair to continue during the night. About eight o'clock, a message arrived for me from Lady Dasent, telling me that as the storm was so severe, they had ventured to detain Amy for the night; in the morning, she would be with me early.

I was both glad and sorry—glad that Amy would not run the risk of encountering any lurking individuals in the darkness; that she was safely at Enfield; but sorry for my own sake, I felt so solitary and, truth to tell, so strangely nervous.

The evening wore on slowly, and as ten o'clock struck I went to my room. It was directly over the drawing-room. Next to mine was Amy's; and on the other side of the landing was the spare room, which had so recently been occupied by Alfred Mauleverer. Above, slept the servants. I heard them go up to bed, and while I could hear them moving about overhead, I was tolerably comfortable; but soon, stillness reigned over the Wren's Nest. My domestics were asleep. The best thing I could do was to follow their example, which after a time I suppose I did, for I was awakened by a noise, a distant sound from the hall below. I scarcely breathed. I could hear my heart beating as I lay listening with strained ears, and recalling with horrified terror the face I had seen at the window.

I need hardly say that I was thoroughly awake. Every nerve was strung to such a pitch of tension,

that if a pin had been dropped, I feel sure I should have heard it. It came again—the sound from below—dull, this time, but distinct; and presently I heard stealthy footsteps coming rapidly and quietly up-stairs—evidently shoeless feet, but none the less audible to my ears. Never since I had lived at the Wren's Nest had I locked my bedroom door; I had a dread of doing it; and despite my nervousness on this occasion, I had not departed from my rule. It was too late to attempt to accomplish it now. Besides, looking back, I think a sort of temporary paralysis had come over me. I heard a hand laid upon the handle; it was turned cautiously, and the next moment, from my curtained bed I distinguished a man bearing some sort of small lamp—his face concealed by a mask—enter.

It was a matter of life or death to me to remain quiet. Through my mind flashed a resolve to deliver up everything I was possessed of—family plate, my mother's amethysts, all my small valuables, to this ruffian, in exchange for my life, should he demand them. But no such intention appeared to be his. He approached the bed, raised his lamp, flashed it for a second on my closed eyes; and then withdrew it, apparently satisfied that I slept. It must have been a cursory glance, for I could not have sustained the deception for more than a moment. He gave a keen look round the room. Only the lower part of his face was covered, so I could see his eyes, small, black, and piercing, with something familiar to me in them, even then. My watch—a legacy from my mother—lay on the toilet-table, but he overlooked it. Evidently, mine was not the room he meant to rifle. Almost noiselessly he vanished out of it, and I heard him proceed into Amy's room next—thank God, it was empty—then into the spare room, where he remained.

All at once it flashed across me that by a little courage I might save everything and secure the thief. In former days, my spare room had been a nursery, and the windows were barred, so as to make all exit from them impossible. If I could slip out of bed, get across the passage, in one second I could lock the door, and, secure from any attack, raise an alarm.

The agony of fear I was in was such that I felt equal to any effort. Without losing a moment, I glided out of bed; a moment's pause acquainted me with the fact that the miscreant was busy; I heard him throwing out things all over the floor. He was searching Mr Mauleverer's portmanteaus; they were quite at the far end of the bedroom; so I calculated that I could safely close and lock the door before he could possibly prevent me. Like a ghost, I moved out of my room on my perilous errand. Through a chink of the half-open door I beheld the man kneeling in front of the larger of the portmanteaus, rifling it with a rapidity and intentness which secured my being for the present discovered. I had intended to seize the door the instant I reached it, but something made me pause in the darkness and peer with terrified eyes into the bedroom. He had his back to me, and I could see the quick movements of his arms as one thing after another was hurriedly thrown upon the ground.

Imagine my feelings as I stood within a few paces of him, to see him with the utmost celerity

tear open the lining of the portmanteau and draw from it a glittering mass of diamonds, which I instantly recognised as Lady Dasent's famous circlet, the one she had worn on the night of the eventful ball, and which, with the other things, had so mysteriously disappeared!

Horror, anguish, and fear well nigh caused me to fall to the ground. I made an involuntary movement; I thought I was fainting; and the noise reached him. Looking up, our eyes met. With the strength born of desperation, I seized the handle of the door, and in a moment the key was safely turned in the lock.

Happily for the lives of myself and my servants, the door was an old-fashioned one, of a particularly strong description; and having a strong outer moulding, it was almost a physical impossibility to break it open from the inside of the room. The exigency of the situation sustained me for the moment, and enabled me to rouse my three servants, who must at first have thought I had gone temporarily out of my mind, when I tried to make them comprehend our position.

It was two o'clock in the morning, still blowing a gale, and dark as Erebus. But assistance must be got. The man within our spare room might have accomplices without; our danger might but be beginning. We had an alarm-bell; that must be rung. Four trembling women, we proceeded in a group to the outer back court, where the bell hung, only to find the rope severed. I had snatched up a cloak, and arrayed myself in my slippers and a skirt. The servants were as little dressed as myself. But it was no time to hesitate; immediate action must be taken. We must rouse the gardener, who lived a considerable way from the house. Through the dark dripping shrubberies, we flew, at every step expecting to be dragged back by some lurker; but no one stopped us. In safety, we reached the cottage; and in a few minutes Arkwright, my gardener and general factotum, was in our midst.

His cottage was within a short distance of several others; and though he wished to go straight to the house, fearing lest the man should have escaped, or been liberated by accomplices, I would not hear of it. I insisted upon his getting a couple of men to accompany him, a precaution for which I saw Arkwright's nice little wife was grateful. This caused some delay; but it had not enabled my captive to escape. The hall door was found open, and everything just as we had left it, the spare room door still closed. By my orders, it was not to be unlocked until the police arrived. Several volunteers had hastened to summon them; and while we were awaiting their arrival, I had time to think a little of the horror of the position. How had Lady Dasent's diamond necklace found its way into Alfred Mauleverer's portmanteau? Could he be some awful impostor, some villain in the guise of a gentleman, whom I had harboured in my house, and to whom I had meditated giving my niece? The shock would almost kill Amy. Even I felt as if I should never get over it.

Who was the man? A dreadful tightness came over my heart when this question presented itself, a suspicion too horrible.

It made the suspense almost too terrible. I heard the policemen arrive, and while they were ascending the stairs to the spare bedroom, I felt almost choked with an apprehension for what I should next hear. The door was unlocked, and there was the thief. He made no resistance; the game was up. Thanks to 'the old woman,' as I heard him style me, he had missed the best chance of clearing a fortune he had ever had. Who was he? Where had I seen him?

The mystery was soon explained. He was the Dasents' magnificent head-butler—one of a gang, as it afterwards was discovered—and who had, with the connivance of his comrades, cleared off the plate, but hoped to secure for his own private benefit the famous diamonds. The fire had so far upset their plans, that he had found himself left in possession of the diamonds, when his services came to be required in aiding to extinguish the fire. In place of flight, therefore, as he had at first intended, the wary butler judged it best to let his confederates make off with the plate, while he remained with the diamonds in his possession, one of the most active in subduing the flames, and suggesting the most feasible schemes for discovering the thieves.

When the detectives came down to Enfield, it became imperative upon him to hit upon some safe place for the diamonds. Mr Mauleverer was blessed with an over-abundant wardrobe; and during his visit to Enfield, this butler had chosen to consider him under his particular care, laying out his clothes, arranging and settling things generally for him. The idea of temporarily depositing the precious gems within the lining of one of that gentleman's portmanteaus, struck him as a brilliant one. His intention of course was to withdraw them directly Mr Mauleverer's departure was about to take place, and he would of course have the best opportunity of doing so while packing his clothes; but his plan by a mere chance miscarried, and he had the mortification of seeing the portmanteau leave Enfield with the diamonds still safely secreted within it.

Mr Mauleverer's temporary absence from our house afforded too good an opportunity to be missed; hence the visit to the Wren's Nest, which very nearly terminated my existence, for the shock and exposure combined brought on an illness from which, for long, it was not expected I should recover.

Amy was my tender nurse all through it, and it was from her lips I heard all the particulars of the robbery, in the sequel to which I had been called on to play so prominent a part.

Happily for both our sakes, she never knew of the terrible suspicions I had for a brief time entertained regarding Mr Mauleverer. That gentleman made his appearance in due time at the Wren's Nest, bearing his father's letter, which informed me not only of his willingness to welcome Amy as his daughter, but to settle an income upon the young couple of the most satisfactory description.

Shortly afterwards, the butler was placed upon his trial, and I was called on, despite my weakened condition, to give evidence against him. This, however, I was happily spared, as the prisoner, acting on the advice of his counsel, pled guilty.

Indeed, I was doubly relieved, as Mauleverer's character was thus vindicated. As the wretched prisoner was being removed, he vowed he would 'pay Miss Courtenay a visit again when his term of imprisonment expired.' However, ten years' penal servitude may bring about a change in his intentions.

Lady Dasent amused me very much by the comforting view she took of the matter. 'Do not trouble your head, my dear Miss Courtenay, about anything the wretch may have said; in the course of nature, you will be beyond his reach long before then.'

'Quite true,' I replied with a smile. 'At all events, I am glad I have lived long enough to be the means of your recovering your diamonds.'

THE PARCELS' POST.

By an Act of Parliament passed in August, the Postmaster-general is authorised to add to the already varied work of the Post-office that of the carriage of parcels within the United Kingdom, according to the following moderate tariff, namely, not exceeding one pound, threepence; three pounds, sixpence; five pounds, ninepence; seven pounds, one shilling. The Act does not, however, prescribe the limits of size of the parcels to be so conveyed, nor the time at which the new scheme shall take effect, these points being left to the determination of the Postmaster-general; but as regards the latter, it is not likely that the scheme can come into operation until some time next spring. Meanwhile, all needful preparations are being made, and the new department of business will no doubt be brought into existence at the earliest possible moment.

To the ordinary individual who takes things as they come, and who does not concern himself with aims and means, the idea of a parcels' post presents itself as a simple arrangement for carrying packages, the only visible signs of which would be an office to take them in and a conveyance to deliver them. But to any one who has seriously reflected upon the vast and intricate machinery by which the operations of the Post-office are carried on, the labour of devising and setting up this new branch of business, and carrying its work into every nook and corner of the United Kingdom, must present itself as one of exceeding magnitude, necessarily demanding a large amount of anxious thought and foresight. When it is remembered that within our little kingdom there are some fourteen thousand post-offices, at each of which provision must be made for the new branch of work, and that at every one of these offices some persons must receive instruction in the new duties about to be imposed upon them; that the mode of delivery in every town and place in the country has to be planned and arranged (not the least troublesome of which will be the delivery along the routes of the rural posts); that a precise and fixed course must be laid down for the transit of the parcels' mails between each place and every other place in the country; that the heavier nature of the parcels' mails will probably revolutionise the mail-cart services along the high-roads—all of which things must be provided for at the outset; it will be understood that the Post-office department has

undertaken a task which will try its energies to the utmost.

That the scheme of the Parcels' Post will be placed on a satisfactory footing, so far as giving a thoroughly good service is concerned, there is little reason to fear. The acquisition and consolidation of the telegraphs have shown what a department of practical officials can do in putting together a large working concern; hence the experience gained by the executive of the Post-office in connection with telegraphs since 1870, will be eminently useful in the work which they have now in hand.

But apart altogether from the purely official aspect of the scheme, there are things to be considered as affecting trade, and the prosperity or otherwise of individuals, arising out of the coming boon to the country at large. Just as the opening up of the country by railway lines has had the effect of driving stage-coaches off the great highways, laying open new avenues to commerce, diverting business into new courses, and taking it away in many cases from the old, thereby bringing adversity to many towns which flourished under the old régime; so the Parcels' Post, by affording a cheap and ready means of obtaining light articles from a distance, will in all probability create disturbance in many branches of trade. It requires no stretch of the fancy to imagine that there will arise a rivalry between tradesmen in a large retail way in the great cities, and their less pretentious brethren in country towns; the former striving by means of advertisements and the Parcels' Post to supply country districts with their wares, the latter struggling to retain the share of business which they already possess. Haberdashers, stationers, tea-merchants, seedsmen, fashionable bootmakers, and smallwares' people of all sorts in the larger towns, besides the great Stores in the Metropolis, will not be slow to discover an extended field for trade brought within range by the new post, and to take advantage of it; while country-people, finding the cost of conveyance for light articles to be but small, may frequently make their purchases in the larger markets, and no longer depend entirely upon local tradespeople.

Yet the country shopkeepers will not be without some compensating advantage; for the ease with which they will be able to procure supplies in small quantities, will enable them to maintain a more varied stock, and so be in a position to supply the neighbourhood with articles for the purchase of which it is now necessary to visit the larger towns. The farmer's wife will no longer need to delay purchases which are not of every-day occurrence, till she makes her periodical visits to the 'big town'; the village shopkeeper will either have the required articles in his more varied stock, or will be able to get them for her promptly and at a trifling cost for carriage. The precise way, however, in which trade will balance itself as between the large and small towns, will not be felt until the Parcels' Post shall have been some time in operation. There seems no reason why townspeople should not obtain fowls, butter, &c., if properly packed, direct from the farm; or why the people of Scotland should not enjoy the luxury of clotted cream direct from Devonshire; or the citizens of London receive

their grouse direct from country dealers in Scotland. But there are very many ways in which trade in light articles will be facilitated by the Parcels' Post; and one decided effect of the scheme will be the equalisation of prices for many articles of the same kind, which now have different values in different parts of the country.

The new post will also greatly encourage intercourse in social circles, by enabling friends to exchange presents more freely from all parts of the kingdom, the cost of sending parcels across country by existing means, acting as a bar to freedom of intercourse in this direction. How the amount of work will be met during Christmas seasons, is a matter for serious thought on the part of the Post-office; for the number of articles that will certainly be sent, as well as their aggregate weight and bulk, will far exceed anything which the railway Companies have hitherto had to contend with at that season.

Another period which will bring special strain upon the department will be the earlier days of the grouse season. Hitherto, sportsmen residing at shooting-lodges along the straths and glens in the Highlands, have been under the necessity of sending their boxes of game for despatch to the nearest railway station, perhaps many miles away; but in future they will no doubt seek, and expect to be relieved of these consignments by the rural postmen, or at the small post-offices in their neighbourhood. The boxes of game which are sent from the Highlands southwards during the shooting-season are numbered by thousands, and the disposal of these, superadded to the ordinary business, will tax the energies of the local post-office people to a large extent.

The simplicity of the tariff, and its uniformity in relation to distance, as well as its moderateness, must bring the service within the understanding and means of the poorest; and every post-office throughout the country being a depot to receive parcels, the scheme will be brought to the door of every one. Some idea of the extent to which the parcels' business will probably grow when the vast agency of the Post-office is set in motion, may be gathered from the experience of the telegraph department, the number of telegrams having increased during the past decade from twelve millions to nearly thirty-two millions annually. Thus, the whole country being brought into complete correspondence with itself, and its telegraph business having nearly trebled in ten years, it may be expected that a somewhat similar development will follow upon the inauguration of the Parcels' Post.

This new business of the Post-office must, however, prove vastly damaging to public carriers generally, the railway Companies excepted. Those carriers who make a trade of collecting parcels in the large towns, and of packing them for transit over the railways in bulk by goods-trains, will inevitably lose a great part of their business. The railway Companies will not suffer, however, for they will be partners with the Post-office, and will share in the business lost to the packers. The Post-office has acquired and maintains so great a prestige for punctuality and reliability, that no Company or undertaking in the country could withstand its competition.

It is impossible to predict what the financial result of the new scheme will be, nor for some

years is it likely that this will be ascertained. At the outset, there must be incurred great expense in providing additional space in all large offices, and in superseding rural foot-posts by horse-posts, over and above the cost of providing additional indoor staff at all important offices. How far the revenue will cover these expenses, experience alone will show. There is one thing at any rate that may be safely predicted, which is, that the new Parcels' Post will prove as great a public boon as the government monopoly of the telegraphs has done.

THE BLACK BUOY.

'SWIM?' said Grandmamma, as we sat round the crackling billets one Christmas Eve. 'Every boy and girl should learn to swim. Why, I could swim like a duck when I was a girl. Dear me, dear me!'

Grandmamma sat bolt upright in her high-backed chair, resting her elbows on the arms, and smiling across at Grandpapa—who sat on the other side of the hearth—with a conscious look in her bright old eyes. Grandpapa, the General, pausing in the act of raising his tumbler to his lips, nodded and smiled back again at Grandmamma. They were both white-haired, bright-eyed, and rosy-cheeked; both sat, straight and erect, in tall red-cushioned oak chairs; and each saw the other through an effacing medium, that smoothed out wrinkles, restored hyacinthine locks, and blotted out the fifty years that lay between them and youth.

Now, when we, the youthful descendants of this stately pair, grouped in lazy attitudes around the vast roaring hearth with its tall carved chimney-piece, saw the meaning looks that were exchanged between our respected progenitors, we scented a story. And when a many-voiced appeal for the story broke from us, Grandmamma hesitated for a moment and shook her head, then looked across to Grandpapa, who nodded again, and after a little pressing she thus began:

You know, young people, that you are of good family only on your Grandfather's side, and not on mine; for he came of an old and honourable stock, while my father was only a ship's bos'n. My father was killed in a great sea-fight, when I was only a little child, and I was brought up by my Grandfather, who was ostensibly a boat-builder and fisherman, in reality a smuggler. A successful smuggler too! In those days, smuggling meant great risks and enormous profits; for duties, especially on foreign wines and spirits, were exceedingly high. It was not only a profitable trade, but it was reputable in a peculiar sort of way; for it required great courage and great skill. England was always at war in those days, and the smuggler ran the risk of being snapped up by an enemy's cruiser as well as of falling into the clutches of a revenue-cutter. In addition, there were the inevitable chances and dangers of the sea. So that a good smuggler had to be

not only a man of great daring but of great knowledge of navigation. He had to work into harbour on the darkest nights—for it was only on dark nights that he could venture on 'a run'—with the utmost secrecy and despatch. To do that, he must know every inch of his way, be able to distinguish landmarks and buoys where an unpractised eye would only see indistinct blackness, and know to a nicety the time the tide turned, the twists of the sandbanks, and the position of sunken rocks.

My Grandfather could neither read nor write, and he had, as I think for that reason, a wonderful memory. He was assisted in his work by my two uncles, both illiterate men like himself; and the three seemed to find their way, through long practice and acute observation, as if by instinct. There was only one channel leading to the landing-place; the mouth of the little river where we lived being almost choked by sandbanks, which ran out to some distance. It was necessary to hit this channel a considerable way out at sea, and a small black buoy bobbed up and down to indicate its commencement. One side of the harbour was formed by a line of rocks, jutting out to some length and shelving down gradually into the water; and the buoy was distant from the extremity of these rocks about three-quarters of a mile. This headland was called the Point.

The black buoy, a mere speck on the waters, was hard enough for any one to find in the broad day; yet my Grandfather never failed to find it in the dark—for of course it was only on a moonless night that he could hope to run a cargo. The usual course of proceeding was this. The lugger arrived off our coast at nightfall, lay to until a signal was flashed from our friends on shore, and then found the entrance to the channel, and worked in with the tide. It was necessary to be very careful in hitting-off the channel at first, where the buoy was, or they might ultimately run on the sunken rocks at the extremity of the Point.

Grandfather and I lived in a pretty cottage at one extremity of the village. Our house was better than most of the others, for Grandfather had money in the bank, and was well to do. The cottage was covered with honeysuckle and creepers; at the back was a well-stocked kitchen-garden; in front was a grassy bank sloping down to the sand, at its junction with which stood our wooden boathouse. By the boathouse lay three or four of our boats, broad, strong, and unwieldy; and opposite the boathouse were the moorings of the *Little Lady*, our naughty, fast-sailing, clever little lugger.

I had a very independent, irregular kind of life. My Grandfather was often away for days at a time, and the old woman who looked after the house—for Grandmother was dead long since—would have had little time for scouring and cleaning if she had tried to look after me. I got

a little book-learning from the old vicar, but it was not enough to hurt me. No, my dears; I knew no Italian, or Latin, or Algebra; but my eyes were none the less bright, my lungs none the less clear, my colour none the less blooming that I passed most of my days in the bright sunshine and the free fresh air. I could run a couple of miles and jump a gate; I could pull an oar with the best, and I could swim like a duck. I was thoroughly at home either on the water or in it. The sea had no terrors or difficulties for me except such as it was a pleasure to overcome. So at sixteen, I am told, I was a fresh-coloured, free-limbed, bright-eyed young maid, whose only trouble was her long tresses of thick brown hair, and who bothered her head very little with the other sex.

Not but what I had my admirers. But they were limited in quantity and coarse in quality. I mean, rough; manly enough, but lacking in that refinement which a young girl in any rank of life always longs for, and with sometimes sad results. Anyhow, the bold young fishermen who made sheepish overtures to my formidable self, excited nothing on my part but polite amusement, and I was quite heart-whole. I was very happy, had a wonderful appetite, was sound in wind and limb; and perhaps, young people, you have to thank the rough freedom of my early life for the excellent constitutions which you now enjoy.

On a certain day in September, when I was nearly seventeen years of age, my Grandfather being absent on one of his expeditions and expected back at night, I set off for one of the long rambles in the country which I was in the habit of taking when he was away. As I was not allowed to go off in this fashion when Grandfather was at home, I made a big day of it, starting immediately after breakfast, and taking some bread and meat with me for dinner. I rambled much farther than I intended, lost my way more than once, and the night was coming on apace when I returned. Tired and footsore, I was taking a short cut over the heathery cliffs, where was only a narrow track made by the sheep, when amidst my dreamy anticipations of supper and bed came the recollection of a little serge bathing-suit which I had meant to fetch in the morning in order to repair it. The little cave where I kept it was among the rocks of the Point, and from where I was, being already on the seaward side of the village, it was not far distant. So I stepped out briskly and soon came to the little gully or ravine in the rocks which led to my cave, and up which, in the course of the night, our smuggled treasures would be stealthily conveyed. Carts used to stand at the upper end of it to take them away.

I slipped into my cave, felt for my dress and found it, and too lazy just then to face the ascent up the gully again, stood gazing out to sea and wondering where my Grandfather was at that moment. Then I turned homewards. I had got about a third of the way up the gully, which was very dark, when I heard a strange sound. I stopped to listen. It was not the scream of a sea-bird nor the moaning of the sea. It came down the gully and drew nearer, beat, beat,

with a little, very distinct jingling sound. It was the tramp of men and the clink of steel. Soldiers! I had never seen any; but I guessed what they were. In a moment I had scrambled cautiously up the rocks, and, hidden behind a ledge, I crouched perfectly still, with every sense on the alert. Suddenly the measured tramp ceased, and presently two men came slowly down the gully, talking in low voices. They wore long cloaks, and their weapons jingled as they walked. They passed me and stood at the lower end of the gully. The air was very still, and I could hear every word they said.

'This is the place, sir,' said the bigger and stouter of the two. 'The goods are landed a little to the left here, carried up the gully, and received at the top by the carts. The carts stand where we came down.'

The other, who, by the ease of his bearing and the deference of the big man, I took to be an officer, had a paper in his hand. He looked around him, evidently taking in the features of the place.

'There won't be any carts to-night, sergeant,' he said in a pleasant voice. 'The people in the village know we are here, and are sure to warn them. I hope they won't manage to warn the man we want.'

'Not they, sir,' answered the sergeant confidently. 'Not a boat can leave the harbour without its being stopped by our men; and not a man can leave the village and come in the direction of the Point, if you post the men as I venture to suggest.' Here the conversation became inaudible for a moment. 'A man at the top of the gully, sir, and the others at intervals on the seaward side of the village. You and I, sir, to manage the signal down here, and then I step up to the man at the top of the gully, one calls in another, and we are all down here ready to receive them.'

'By all means,' said the officer; 'and as you know the place and I don't, you had better post the men.—By the way,' he added, scanning the paper in his hand and holding it close to his eyes, 'at twelve-thirty, I think it is, the signal. You undertake that, don't you?'

The sergeant produced something, probably a lantern, from under his cloak. 'Here is the signal, sir.'

'Then we're right.—Now, post the men.'

The sergeant saluted and clanked up the gully; while the officer walked slowly towards the water and stood at the edge—some distance from me, for the tide was getting low—with his head bowed, and his hands clasping the paper behind his back. I ventured to breathe freely again, and began to review the situation. What did it all mean? It meant that the authorities had got wind of my Grandfather's doings, and had sent this detachment of soldiers to take him in the act. It must be my Grandfather, because there was no one else in the village likely to be aimed at. And if they caught him, what then? What was this form of words that kept ringing in my ears over and over again? 'Transportation for life!' What was that? It was no uncommon punishment, I had heard, for a smuggler taken, as my Grandfather was likely to be, red-handed. For a moment the hope flashed into my head that he

might not come that night. But no! The wind was light, and not unfavourable; there was no suggestion of a fortunate storm in the sky, and I knew that our friends with the wagons had arranged to come and that all was in readiness. My heart sank within me as I thought of my old Grandfather's gray hairs dishonoured in the felon's dock—for I had once seen a man tried—and his kind old face bidding me farewell for ever. I bowed my head on my hands and longed to cry.

Suddenly I raised my head, and my heart beat with a bold resolve. I would save him. Yes, I! The skill that I had attained for my own heedless pleasures should be put to stern service. My resolve was this. When the lugger showed her signal in answer to that treacherous one from the shore, I would swim out to the buoy, and keep myself afloat at the entrance of the channel until I could hail our people and warn them of their danger.

I never hesitated after I had formed this resolution. I forgot that I was tired and hungry, put aside the thought of cold or exhaustion in the water, and began instantly to make my preparations. On the narrow ledge of rock where I now knelt, I undressed and put on my little bathing-dress, which consisted only of a tunic and drawers. My own clothes I made into a bundle and stowed away behind a stone. Then, like a cat, I clambered up the rocks, hiding behind every projection, and keeping a fearful watch upon the sentinel at the head of the gully. Fortunately, the gully was not very deep. When I got to the top, I crept on my hands and feet until I judged I was well out of sight, and started for the end of the Point. I took my time, for there was no hurry, and I had to husband my strength; and at last I reached the rock from which I meant to start. There I sat down to wait.

I did not know the time and could only guess it by calculating from the sunset. How long should I have to wait? How long did I wait? Heaven knows; but it seemed an age. I got sleepy from my day's exertions. The night-air was cold too, and my clothing, however well adapted for exercise, was somewhat scanty for sitting in. Besides, it was damp. The wretchedness of that long watch comes over me now. Oh! would the slow minutes never pass?

Thicker and thicker grew the gathering darkness. The waters and the heavens were blended in obscurity, and there, at the end of the rocks, I sat patiently, a poor little figure shivering in the gloom, listening to the lap of the waves as they beat upon the rocks, and peering out to sea with all my heart in my eyes. I waited so long that I believed I must have fallen asleep and missed the signal, and at the thought I was burying my face in my hands, to give way to despair, when something stopped me—and flash! far out on the dark sea, there it was! I sprang to my feet, every nerve tingling. The moment for action had arrived.

I paused for a moment to picture to myself the bearings of the buoy. I knew exactly how it lay from the Point, for I had swum round it often enough. But not in the dark! Not with the water a vast black plain mingling with the black sky; not with the fear of sinking to those

mysterious depths, unseen, unheard, unhelped. But I never hesitated. Into the cold flood I plunged, and struck out boldly in the direction I had determined upon. After a few vigorous strokes, the sense of active exercise, exultation in physical power and use of skill, overcame my misgivings. But they came on again when I looked around on that murky waste of waters. Could I be sure I was going in the right direction? Might I not swim and swim and never find that of which I was in search, lose myself and become exhausted—to sink beneath that silent sky, alone?

But on I went, struggling hard to keep my wits about me in spite of the horrors that would rush over my brain again and again. It was hard physical work too, for the tide was coming in; there were breakers in the shallows, and in the channel the stream was fast and strong. It was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead, level as I was with the water. With the tide running so hard against me, it was difficult to judge how far out I had succeeded in getting. Once I all but gave up. I got out of the channel among the breakers, and the buffeting and beating bewildered me, so that I fell into a sort of panic. I threw myself on my back, and in the very act—thanks to my practised eyesight, that could more or less see in the dark—I caught sight of the buoy. There it was, bobbing up and down, looking to me like a thing of life. I swam to it and kept close by. It was like a friend in all this desolation of heaving seas. But now came the worst watch of the whole. The lugger must inevitably pass within hail of me; but what if my strength gave out before she came? For my strength was ebbing fast. I had been without food since noon, I had walked many miles, swimming is an exacting exercise, and I had still to exert myself resolutely with the tide running fast, to maintain my present position. My limbs moved mechanically, my head was dull and heavy, and there was a sort of tingling in my ears. I knew I was going fast.

A little gleam of parting waters, a black mass looming blacker than the darkness, and I summoned all my energies for a shout. '*Little Lady, ahoy!*'

A voice came from the darkness. '*Little Lady* it is. Who are you?'

'Lay to, and throw a rope over your starboard quarter.'

The lugger was not thirty yards distant. I made my last effort and swam to her. A rope was thrown; they hauled me on board; and I had just time to give my warning before I fell fainting on the deck.

When I came to, the last keg of our cargo was being lowered into the sea. We were some little distance up the coast, and floats were attached to the kegs so that we might be able to find them again. So expeditiously was all this done that it was only some two hours afterwards when we beat cautiously up the channel and cast anchor opposite the mouth of the gully. We pulled ashore in our boat. As she grounded and we leapt out, dark figures started up around, lights flashed upon us, and we were surrounded by soldiers.

'In the King's name,' said the young officer, advancing with his sword drawn and his cloak thrown back to show his scarlet uniform.

It was a picturesque group illuminated by the flickering light of the soldiers' torches. My tall, old Grandsire with his weather-beaten face and gray hair; the boyish, handsome young officer, bright with scarlet and steel; the stolid seamen in their blue jerseys and sou'-westers; the soldiers with their bronzed faces and glittering accoutrements; and, I suppose, myself keeping under shelter of my stalwart Grandsire, disguised as I was in a suit of oilskins and a big sou'-wester that almost covered my rebellious hair.

My Grandfather said nothing when the young lieutenant ordered the sergeant to board the lugger, and only a quiet twinkle of his keen gray eye showed his enjoyment of the scene. He stood looking up at the sky, while the lieutenant kept his eyes fixed on the ground and toyed with his sword-belt. The soldiers had to row, and clumsily enough they did it, provoking one of the stolid seamen to a loud guffaw which was instantly suppressed.

The sergeant was back again pretty soon, his red face turned to purple with wrath. 'We've been made fools of, sir,' he exclaimed, saluting the lieutenant. 'Nothing on board except some nets.'

The lieutenant's face fell for an instant; then he looked at the sergeant's wrathful countenance, and bit his lips to keep from smiling.

The sergeant was at white-heat. 'With your permission, sir, I'll search these fellows,' says he.

'If you like,' answered the lieutenant carelessly.

The search was soon accomplished, and they found nothing that they wanted. I kept behind my Grandfather's back, hoping to escape observation. But the sergeant caught me by the wrist. My Grandfather interposed.

'There is nothing contraband on that boy,' said he peremptorily.

'We'll soon see that,' answered the soldier, grasping my wrist until I could have screamed with pain.

My Grandfather did not strike him, but administered a kind of push with his heavy shoulder that sent the sergeant, big as he was, staggering a yard or two. With the loosing of his hold, I slipped and almost fell; off went my sou'-wester, and down, alas! streamed my long brown hair all over me. The young officer instantly stepped between the sergeant and me.

'I don't think we need search this youngster,' he said in a tone of quiet authority. 'He is not likely to have anything contraband about him.—Where have you been to-night?' he added, turning to my Grandfather, while I got into the background, conscious that the young gentleman's quick eyes had found me out.

'Lobster-fishing,' answered my Grandfather unblushingly.

'Not much sport, I'm afraid,' said the lieutenant, looking abstractedly over my Grandfather's shoulder.

'Not a great deal,' answered my Grandfather. 'But we've taken as much as you, sir. Perhaps you would like to come with us some time and we might do better.'

'Perhaps I will,' answered the officer, still glancing over the other's shoulder. 'Meanwhile,

I am sorry to have caused you or yours any annoyance. Good-night to you.—Fall in, men !'

And away they went.—But my Grandfather gave up the trade after that and sold the lugger.

Grandmamma paused, and looked at Grandpapa with a smile.

'And did you never see the lieutenant again after that?' inquired a bright girl of fourteen, with long brown hair, probably like what Grandmamma's once was.

'My dear,' said Grandpapa, 'I was the lieutenant.'

A WORD OR TWO UPON FRIENDSHIP.

FRANCIS BACON closes his essay on Friendship by saying that 'where a man cannot fitly play his own part, if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.' We cannot conceive a more wretched existence than to be entirely without friends. Unhappy indeed must that man be whose life has become so depraved and selfish, that in counting up all his acquaintance, the reflection forces itself on him: 'I have not a friend in the world.' Well indeed may Bacon say 'he may quit the stage.' He that would have friends, 'must show himself friendly;' and therefore, if it chance that any read this who are inclined to say, 'I have no friends,' let them be sure that the fault is, as likely as not, entirely theirs, and not that of the multitude around them.

Men are too apt to lament over the fickleness of friendship, which indeed is deeply to be deplored; yet in nine cases out of ten, if inquired into, it will be seen that this was due to their own fault in choosing such a friend, or to their own indiscreet actions subsequently. The first and most important step is in the choice of friends; and for this, it is very necessary that one should consider the object of friendship, and prove slowly—step by step—that there is such a communion of feeling and unity of purpose as can alone make friendship firm and lasting. If we desire to form a friendship for some particular object that we have in view, but cannot otherwise obtain, then our motive is unworthy, and we must not be surprised at finding a sudden cessation of the friendship before that object is gained. As friendship is slow in its growth, so it should be tough and lasting in its endurance; and there should be the greatest charity and forbearance on both sides ere one link of the golden chain which binds it is rudely snapped asunder.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade.

Friends should be few—that is, those whom we would retain as bosom-friends; and they should be those on whom we can depend, for some firm and solid reason other than a mere sentiment, which may be changed and altered by more powerful motives; for any feeling that is based on sentiment only, and has no solid reasons to support it, must in time alter as that fact becomes apparent. There are few who can enter into the deep and earnest friendship which David so feelingly describes as between him and Jonathan:

'Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.' A man's duties and every-day work would in many cases preclude him from cementing friendships of so close and sacred a character. Time or opportunity might not admit of his communicating and interchanging thoughts, feelings, and ideas which would be necessary to insure and foster them. But he may be on terms of friendship in different stages and degrees with every fellow-creature with whom he comes in contact. It is not too much to say that there is some spark of goodness even in the most degraded of our race, and therefore it should be the anxious endeavour of every one desirous of obtaining friendship to find the common ground of association between himself and his fellow-man; to claim it and cherish it, and gain a friend on that one ground, if all beside should proclaim rather an enmity—but which a friendly nature would be careful not to declare in an unfriendly way. So in all our troubles and cares, our anxieties and misfortunes, our pleasures, our joys, our successes, we would have a multitude of sympathising friends; and they would be *real* friends in the degree that we have thoughts in common; and by the common tie and feeling we could always claim them. We should not mistake as friends mere acquaintances of whom we know nothing; or familiar faces. The chances are that there are many whose names we do not even know, more firmly united to us in friendship by the bonds of common feeling, hopes, and inspirations, than those to whom we are accustomed to bid 'good-morrow.' True friendship is a noble thing, and there are many instances of its perfection.

Some one may say: But what is the use of friendship? It is this—the intermingling of ideas and affections with each other, which, if fully carried out, would bind humanity with an encircling cord, rendering wars and tumults impossible, and the diffusion of the arts of peace and domestic comfort more practicable. In the narrower sphere of individuals, as Bacon says, 'It is the ease and discharge of the fullness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds cause and induce; for as there are diseases of stoppings and suffocations most dangerous to the body, so are there also to the mind. We take medicine for the one; but no receipt openeth the heart like a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatever lies upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.' The loss of fortune often is the forerunner of the loss of 'friends,' so called, but who in reality are none; merely attendants on fortune, and for whom, if we acted wisely, we should have no other feeling except of pity. And to guard against such disaster, let us remember that it is not the fawning professor who is most likely to prove the 'friend in need.'

Friendship real and true is that which suffers even death for its friend; that no hardship or trial or adversity can shake off, using plain and outspoken admonitions and warnings in prosperity, and kind and gentle advice and assistance in adversity.

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